

WAR OF THE ROSES? - NOT THESE DAYS!

We tend to recall the War of the Roses as a bloody battle in history, although many of us may remember it as a comedy film starring Michael Douglas depicting a couple engaging in the bloodiest of wars during their divorce.

The truth is there is nothing remotely humorous about relationship breakdowns. Pain, stress, anxiety, fear of conflict and legal costs are all commonly experienced emotions leading up to and during separation and divorce.

There are no winners and losers in divorce, and every effort must be made to try and help couples separate and divorce in a conciliatory manner; not only for their sakes; but for the sake of their children.

Many couples still think a divorce means a 'battle in the courts' with lawyers fighting hard for their clients. This is not the ideal way to resolve issues, particularly if separated parents have to remain in contact because of the children. A more collaborative approach is needed.

My colleagues and I believe in a constructive, non-confrontational approach to settling family law matters. It may not be appropriate in all cases, but if we can minimise any unnecessary hostility and resolve matters successfully through collaboration, then we are likely to reduce the emotional and financial costs of the divorce.

We are all members of Resolution, an organisation of some 5000 lawyers committed to this approach.

Wherever appropriate we will consider as a first option Family Mediation or Collaborative Law.

Mediation allows the couple to discuss and hopefully resolve their family issues in a safe environment with the assistance of a neutral family mediator, whether these issues are to do with the family finances or arrangements for the children.

Collaborative Law is a relatively new way of dealing with family disputes and the aim, through "four way meetings" with both lawyers and clients present, is to work things out face-to-face without going to Court.

At Herrington & Carmichael we have two mediators and three collaborative lawyers to help you through this undoubtedly difficult time and to consequently make the process a little easier.

We offer a free one hour initial consultation so we can discuss the options available with you and help you to make the right decision on the way forward. Our offices are located at Watchmoor Park, which is less than 5 minutes from Junction 4 of the M3. Client car parking is available on site.



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